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THE SYRIAN GODDESS.

The Syrian Goddess; Being a translation of Lucian's "De Dea Syria" with a Life of Lucian. By Prof. H. A. Strong. Edited with notes and an introduction by Dr. J. Garstang. Pp. xiii+111. (London: Constable and Co., 1913.) Price 4s. net.

IN view of recent excavation upon sites in Syria, and of the increased interest the ancient cults of that region have for the archæologist, it was well worth while to produce an annotated edition of the well-known treatise "De dea Syria." The editors accept the traditional ascription of the work to Lucian, and there is much to be said for this view; for, although the rest of Lucian's works are written in pure Attic Greek, he may well in his early youth have adopted the Ionic dialect for this treatise in imitation of Herodotus. We should then assign its composition to the middle of the second century B.C. In any case, the record is that of an intelligent traveller who is anxious to make known the facts he has been able to ascertain as to the strange Oriental rites of Syria, and as such it has the very greatest value for the archæologist. Its author describes the cult and temple of the goddess of North Syria, Atargatis, and that of her male consort, at Hierapolis, near Mumbij, on the Euphrates. It has long been recognised that Atargatis was a combination of the Cilician goddess Atheh with Athar, the Aramaic form of the goddess Astarte or Ishtar.

In his introduction Prof. Garstang would trace her descent from a still more remote antiquity, connecting her with the chief goddess of the Hittites, the great nature-mother who appears in the Anatolian rock-sculptures. One of the earliest of her images may well be that mysterious and gigantic figure carved in the living rock on Mount Sipylus, near Smyrna. The fact that Atargatis of Hierapolis is always represented as robed upon coins from the site is in favour of the Hittite comparison; and the descent of her consort from the Hittite and Mitannian weather-god Teshub is rendered probable by the fact that the author of the treatise, "De dea Syria," identifies him with the Syrian Adad. Thus it may well be that much of the cult the author describes had been inherited from the ritual of the Anatolian deity as practised fifteen centuries before he wrote.

Prof. Garstang's notes and introduction give
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evidence of wide reading in the course of his study of this interesting theme, and the book will form a useful supplement to the collection of material he has already published in his larger work on "The Land of the Hittites." L. W. K.

STONES AND SUPERSTITIONS.

The Curious Lore of Precious Stones. By Dr. G. F. Kunz. Pp. xiv+406+63 plates, and numerous illustrations in the text. (Philadelphia and London: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1913.) Price 21s. net.

DR. KUNZ'S wide knowledge and experience in connection with precious and semi-precious stones, and his familiarity with the voluminous literature dealing with the subject, afford a sufficient guarantee to all interested in gems and their "curious lore," that the work he has now produced is one of exceptional value. On the title-page of this handsome volume the subjects to be dealt with in relation to gems are enumerated as "their sentiments and folk-lore, superstitions, symbolism, mysticism, use in medicine, protection, prevention, religion, and divination, crystal-gazing, birth-stones, lucky stones, and talismans, astral, zodiacal, and planetary"—and this long list is far from exhausting the mass of extraordinary and fanciful ideas treated of in the book, and constituting one of the strangest illustrations of human credulity and love of the marvellous.

With regard to the disputed question as to whether precious stones first came to be prized as ornaments or talismans, our author does not attempt to give a decision; he justly points out that the absence of precious stones in the oldest known interments, where shells, etc., appear to be used as ornaments, may be accounted for by the hardness of the stones which prevents easy perforation. Jet ornaments, however, occur with Palæolithic remains, both in the caves of Belgium and Switzerland, and harder stones are found in Neolithic graves. Of the early use of stones as fetishes there is no doubt; life, sex, powers of reproduction, and many extraordinary virtues and influences were ascribed to them at the dawn of history. Magic formulæ concerning stones are found alike in the clay tablets of Sumero-Assyrian age and in Egyptian papyri of very early date. The earliest engraved cylinders of Babylon are ascribed to 4000 B.C., and scarabs of Egypt to 2000 B.C., while amber was found in abundance in the graves of Mycenæ. In classical times magical influences were ascribed to the beautifully engraved gems, partly on account of the materials of which they are composed, and partly

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